

REMARKS

Claims 2 and 5 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claim 5 was previously amended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 to recite “a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer comprising, as ~~which is made of at least~~ a pressure-sensitive adhesive, ~~comprising~~ a final polymer in which the content of low-molecular components having a molecular weight of 105 or lower is 10% by weight or lower, and the final polymer has a weight average molecular weight of 930,000 to 2,100,000”. Claim 2 was also amended to recite “the final polymer”.

Claim 5 is now further amended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c) to recite “A semiconductor wafer processing method, comprising adhering a removable pressure-sensitive adhesive sheet ~~which comprises wherein~~ a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer comprises ~~comprising, as a final~~ polymer constituting a pressure-sensitive adhesive, a final polymer in which the final polymer content of low-molecular components having a molecular weight of 105 or lower is 10% by weight or lower, and the final polymer has a weight average molecular weight of 930,000 to 2,100,000, to a front or back surface of the wafer, and processing the wafer.

Support may be found, for example, in Reference Examples 5 and 6 on pages 18-19 of the specification as originally filed. No new matter is added.

Entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested along with reconsideration and review of the claims on the merits.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The rejection of Claims 2 and 5 are maintained under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants respond as follows.

As previously noted, Claim 5 is further amended. In order to advance prosecution and in order to clarify the present invention, Applicants amend Claim 5 by taking out language which is assertedly equivalent to meaning “comprising” without changing the scope of the claim by this particular amendment.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 5 is now even clearer and definite, and in accordance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The rejection of Claims 2 and 5 is maintained under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP ‘470 taken in view of Applicants’ alleged admissions in the specification regarding the usage of pressure sensitive adhesive sheets in semiconductor processing operations, substantially for the reasons set forth in paragraph No. 3 of Paper No. 14.

Applicants rely on the position taken in the Amendment filed under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

The present invention measures the molecular weight of the polymer at the end of the reaction to determine the content of low molecular weight components. It is clear from the disclosure that Applicants’ claim a weight-average molecular weight range based on final or

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)

U.S. Application No. 09/735,892

Q62230

post-reaction polymers versus EP '470 disclosure of pre-reaction acrylic copolymers having a number average molecular weight range of 100,000 to 500,000.

Applicants respectfully submit that nothing in EP 470 or any other cited reference discloses or suggests individually or in combination thereof at least a final polymer with a weight average molecular weight of 930,000 to 2,100,000 and the additional elements of Claims 2 or 5.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of Claims 2 and 5.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)

U.S. Application No. 09/735,892

Q62230

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



John K. Shin
Registration No. 48,409

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: March 2, 2004